

MARVEL
COMICS

MIGHTY
1ST
ISSUE!

OCT
1998

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

STINGER™

THE NEXT GENERATION
OF AVENGERS!
NEXT™

Jubilee™

SPEEDBALL™

THUNDERSTRIKE™

MAINFRAME™

A SENSATIONAL NEW SUPER-TEAM
FOR YOU, THE MOST
DISCRIMINATING READER OF ALL!

DEFALCO

FRENZ

BREEDING

THE FIRST
OF A NEW
SERIES
OF BOOK-
LENGTH
EPICS
FEATURING
THE NEXT
GENERATION
OF

EARTH'S
MIGHTIEST
HEROES!

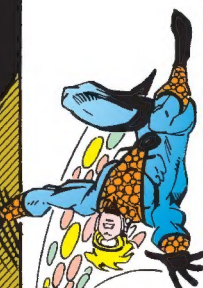
THE PLACE: ASGARD,
THE LEGENDARY HOME
OF THE NORSE GODS!
THE TIME: A PRESENT...
WHICH MAY OR MAY NOT
BE OUR OWN!
THE MAN: TYRUS THE
TERRIBLE, A RATHER
MISANTHROPIC ROCK
TROLL!
THE SITUATION: KEEP
READING AND FIND OUT--!

ATTACK,
MY BROTHERS!
ATTACK!

WE MUST
DESTROY THOSE
WHO DARE DEFEY
OUR MERCILESS
MASTER!



Jubilee



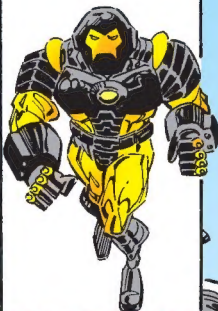
SPEED
BALL



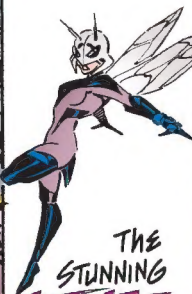
THE
SUPER-
CHARGED
JOLT



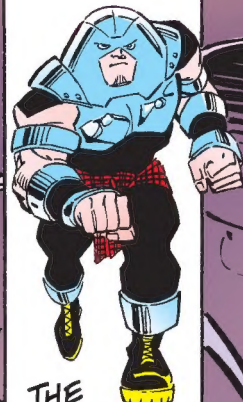
THUNDERSTRIKE



MAINFRAME



THE
STUNNING
STINGER



THE
UNSTOPPABLE

WARNING! DO NOT TURN
THIS PAGE UNLESS YOU'RE FULLY
PREPARED TO EMBARK ON THE
WILDEST THRILL RIDE IN THE
HISTORY OF COMICS!

SECOND COMING!

TOM DEFALCO & RON FRENZ - WORDS/PLOT/PENCILS
BRETT BREEDING - FINISHED ART
JIM NOVAK - CALLIGRAPHY
BOB SHAREN - COLOR ARTIST
BOB HARRAS - CHIEF TROLL

SHOUTING WITH SAVAGE GLEE, TWO DOZEN HEAVILY-ARMED TROLLS SUDDENLY SPRING UPON A MOST UNLIKELY TEAM OF HEROES...

JOLT-- THEY'RE CLOSING IN TO YOUR LEFT!

THANKS FOR THE HEADS UP, JUBILEE! THAT'S ANOTHER ONE I OWE YOU!

HOW ARE YOU HOLDING UP, KID?

Uh... OKAY, I GUESS!

IF THESE SHOCKWAVES ARE ANYTHING TO GO BY, I'D SAY I'M FINALLY GETTING A HANDLE ON MY NEW POWERS!

EVEN IF WE SURVIVE THESE MONSTERS, MAINFRAME-- WE STILL HAVE THE PROBLEM OF GETTING HOME!

CONCENTRATE ON THE BATTLE AT HAND, STINGER!

I AM CONFIDENT THAT WE WILL FIND A WAY TO RETURN TO EARTH WHEN THE TIME COMES.

YAHOO!
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THE REST OF YOU GUYS... BUT I'M HAVING A TOTAL BLAST!

T-THIS ONE CAN'T BE HUMAN!

HE DWARFS OUR GREATEST WARRIORS, AND SEEMS IMPERVIOUS TO HARM!

WELL... DUHHH!

DO THE WORDS INVINCIBLE JUGGERNAUT RING ANY BELLS?

GROWLING WITH RUTHLESS FURY-- DETERMINED TO WIN AT ANY COST --THE INHUMAN HORDE ATTEMPTS TO OVERWHELM THE VALIANT DEFENDERS BY SHEER FORCE OF NUMBERS!

BUT THE CRUSADERS GALLANTLY FIGHT ON--GRIMLY AND WITHOUT HESITATION--EVEN THOUGH ONE OF THEIR NUMBER IS WEIGHED DOWN BY THOUGHTS OF GUILT...

T-THIS IS ALL MY FAULT!

I'LL BE RESPONSIBLE IF ANY OF THE OTHERS ARE HURT OR KILLED--!

EVEN AS HE CONTINUES TO BATTLE, THE YOUNG WARRIOR THINKS BACK TO EVENTS WHICH TRANSPIRED ONLY HOURS AGO...

WELCOME TO AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS!

BUILT ON THE SITE OF THE ORIGINAL AVENGERS MANSION, THIS WAS THE ACTUAL COMMAND CENTER USED BY EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES UNTIL THEY OFFICIALLY DISBANDED YEARS AGO!

WE AT THE MARIA STARK FOUNDATION HOPE YOU ENJOY THE TOUR.

PLEASE VISIT OUR GIFT KIOSK AS YOU LEAVE, AND REMEMBER THAT ALL PROCEEDS GO TO CHARITY.

MR. MASTERSON? I AM EDWIN JARVIS, CHIEF OF STAFF.

YOU CAN CALL ME KEVIN, SIR. MR. MASTERSON WAS MY FATHER.

AS YOU WISH, KEVIN. PLEASE COME THIS WAY--!

I'M NOT EVEN SURE WHY I'M HERE. I'VE BEEN LIVING IN CALIFORNIA, AND ONLY RECENTLY RETURNED TO NEW YORK TO ATTEND ART SCHOOL.

MY FATHER'S LAWYER--SAMANTHA JOYCE--INSTRUCTED ME TO CALL YOU.

ON YOUR EIGHTEENTH BIRTHDAY--YES--MASTER THOR BRIEFED ME FOR THIS OCCASION.

THOR, HUH? I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM SINCE MY FATHER'S MEMORIAL SERVICE.

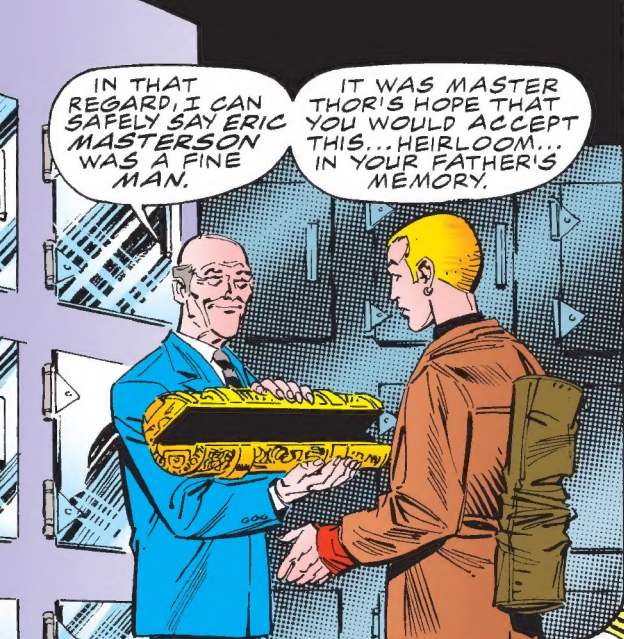
TELL YOU THE TRUTH, MR. JARVIS, I'M NOT SURE I'M READY FOR THIS! I STILL HAVE MIXED EMOTIONS ABOUT MY DAD'S... ER... HOBBY.

BEING AN AVENGER IS MUCH MORE THAN A SIMPLE PASTIME.

I WON'T CLAIM TO HAVE KNOWN YOUR FATHER VERY WELL--HIS TIME WITH US WAS FAR TOO SHORT--BUT HE WAS A FINE AVENGER!

REALLY?! ACCORDING TO THE HISTORY BOOKS, HE WAS A BIT OF A SCREW-UP!

ONE'S CHARACTER IS FAR MORE IMPORTANT THAN ONE'S SKILL WITH SUPER-POWERS.



IN THAT REGARD, I CAN SAFELY SAY ERIC MASTERSON WAS A FINE MAN.

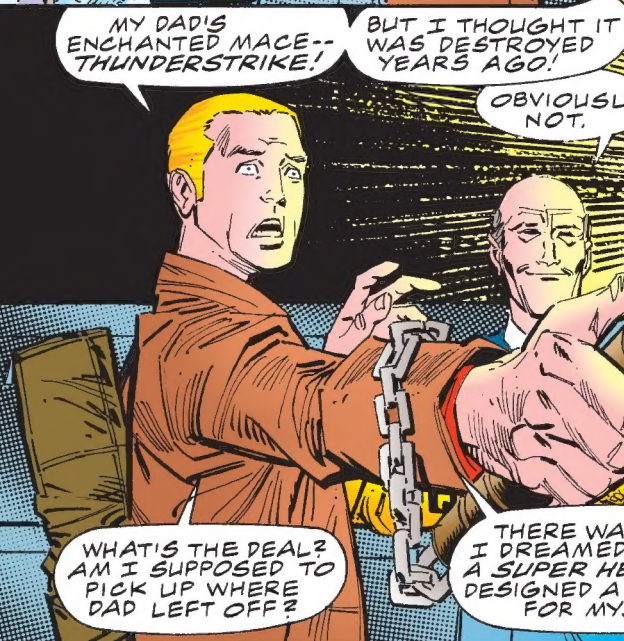
IT WAS MASTER THOR'S HOPE THAT YOU WOULD ACCEPT THIS... HEIRLOOM... IN YOUR FATHER'S MEMORY.



I...

NO!

THIS IS... IMPOSSIBLE!



MY DAD'S ENCHANTED MACE-- THUNDERSTRIKE!

BUT I THOUGHT IT WAS DESTROYED YEARS AGO!

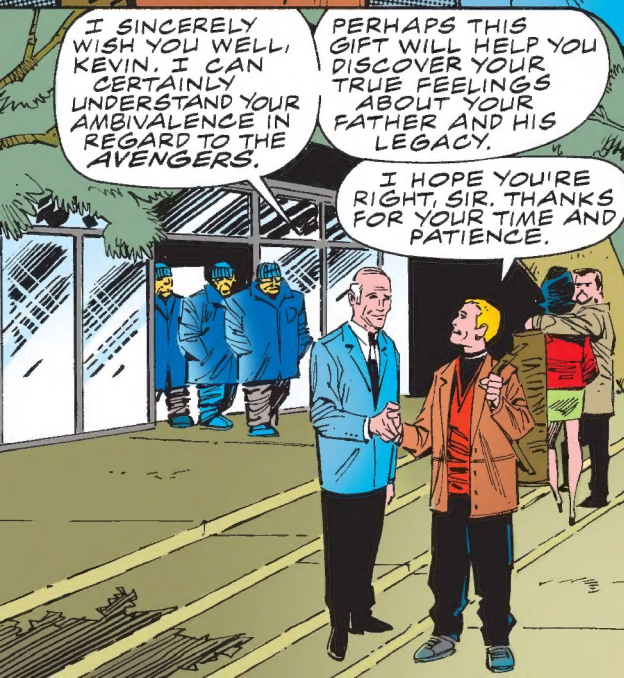
OBSOLETE NOT.

WHAT'S THE DEAL? AM I SUPPOSED TO PICK UP WHERE DAD LEFT OFF?

THERE WAS A TIME I DREAMED OF BEING A SUPER HERO-- EVEN DESIGNED A COSTUME FOR MYSELF!

IF YOU WISH TO FOLLOW THAT PATH, IT WON'T BE THROUGH THIS WEAPON.

MASTER THOR INFORMED ME THAT THE MACE'S MAGIC WAS TIED TO YOUR FATHER. IT'S ONLY A KEEPSAKE NOW.



I SINCERELY WISH YOU WELL, KEVIN. I CAN CERTAINLY UNDERSTAND YOUR AMBIVALENCE IN REGARD TO THE AVENGERS.

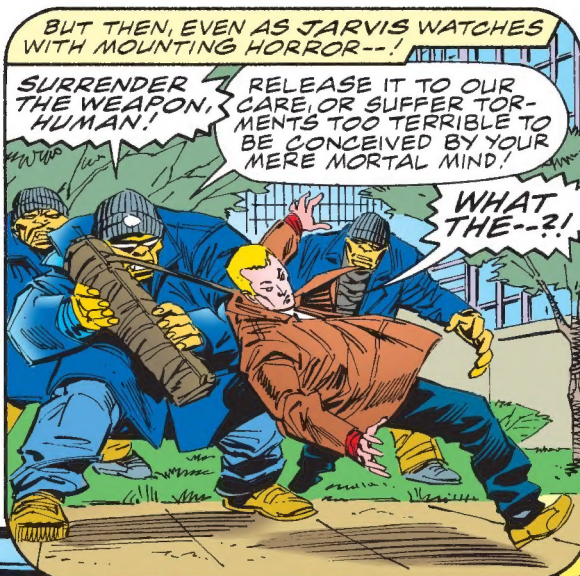
PERHAPS THIS GIFT WILL HELP YOU DISCOVER YOUR TRUE FEELINGS ABOUT YOUR FATHER AND HIS LEGACY.

I HOPE YOU'RE RIGHT, SIR. THANKS FOR YOUR TIME AND PATIENCE.



SUCH A FINE YOUNG MAN, I DARE SAY HIS FATHER WOULD BE MOST PROUD OF-- EH?

IS IT MY IMAGINATION... OR ARE THOSE RATHER BROAD GENTLEMEN CONVERGING ON KEVIN?



BUT THEN, EVEN AS JARVIS WATCHES WITH MOUNTING HORROR--!

SURRENDER THE WEAPON, HUMAN!

RELEASE IT TO OUR CARE, OR SUFFER TORMENTS TOO TERRIBLE TO BE CONCEIVED BY YOUR MERE MORTAL MIND!

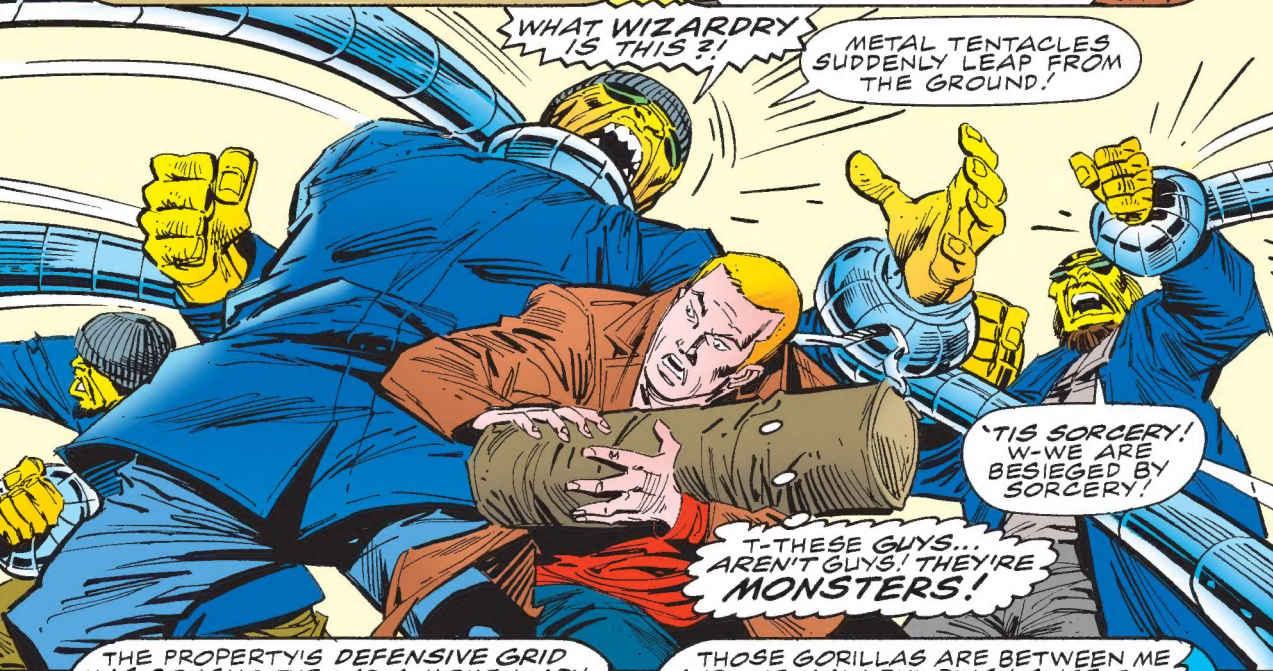
WHAT THE--?!



I HEARD NEW YORK WAS DANGEROUS, BUT I THOUGHT I'D BE SAFE ON AVENGERS PROPER--HOO-BOY!

WHAT THE HECK ARE YOU--?!

THE WEAPON--! WE HAVE COME FOR THE MACE, AND WE SHALL NOT BE--



WHAT WIZARDRY IS THIS?!

METAL TENTACLES SUDDENLY LEAP FROM THE GROUND!

'TIS SORCERY! W-WE ARE BESIEGED BY SORCERY!

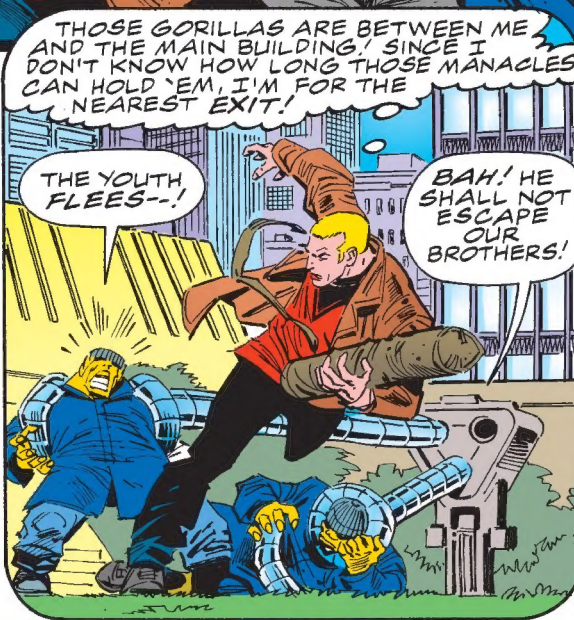
T-THese GUYS... AREN'T GUYS! THEY'RE MONSTERS!



THE PROPERTY'S DEFENSIVE GRID HAS BOUGHT THE LAD A MOMENTARY RESPITE, BUT THE DANGER IS FAR FROM OVER--!

LOOK--! THEY'RE HAVING SOME SORT OF EXHIBITION ON THE FRONT LAWN!

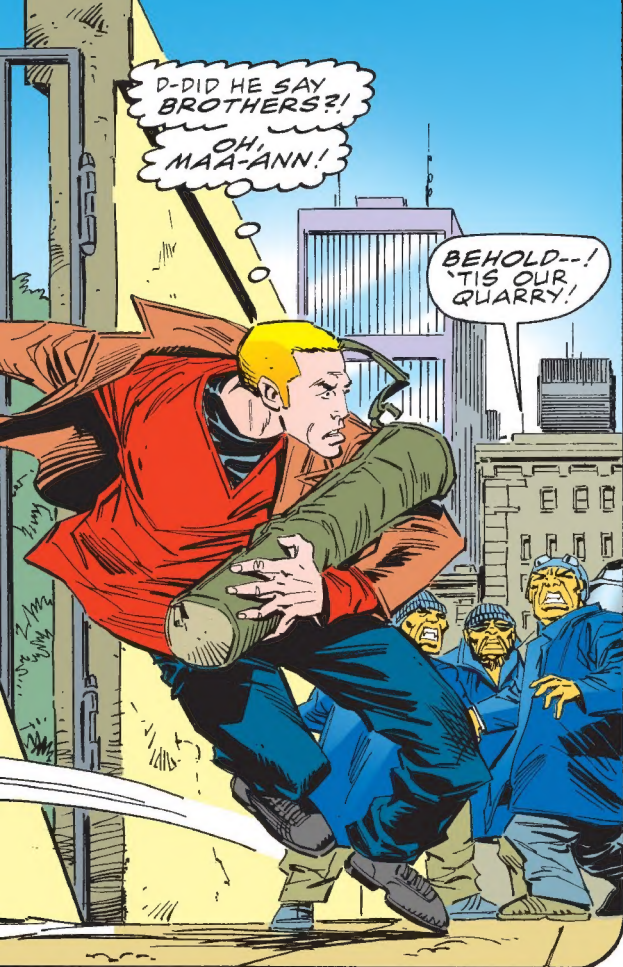
A-ARE YOU SURE IT'S ONLY A SHOW?!

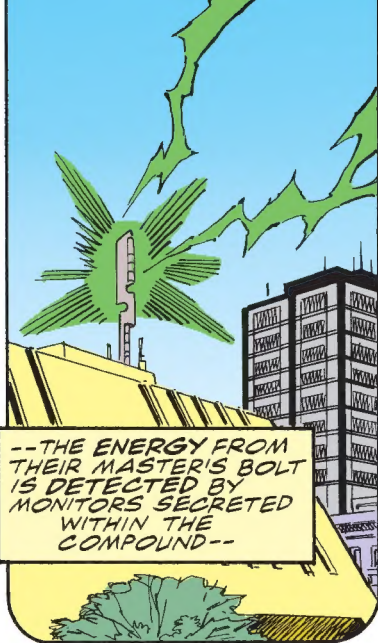


THOSE GORILLAS ARE BETWEEN ME AND THE MAIN BUILDING! SINCE I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG THOSE MANACLES CAN HOLD 'EM, I'M FOR THE NEAREST EXIT!

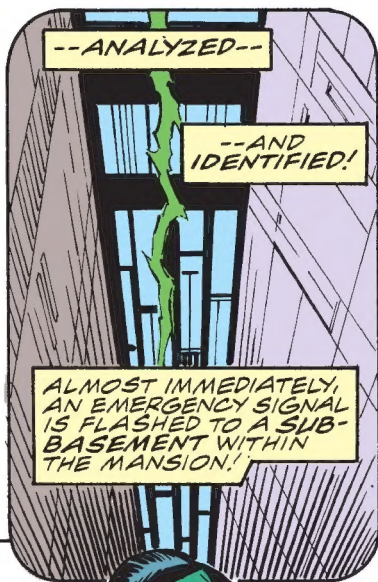
THE YOUTH FLEES--!

BAH! HE SHALL NOT ESCAPE OUR BROTHERS!





--THE ENERGY FROM THEIR MASTER'S BOLT IS DETECTED BY MONITORS SECRETED WITHIN THE COMPOUND--



--ANALYZED--

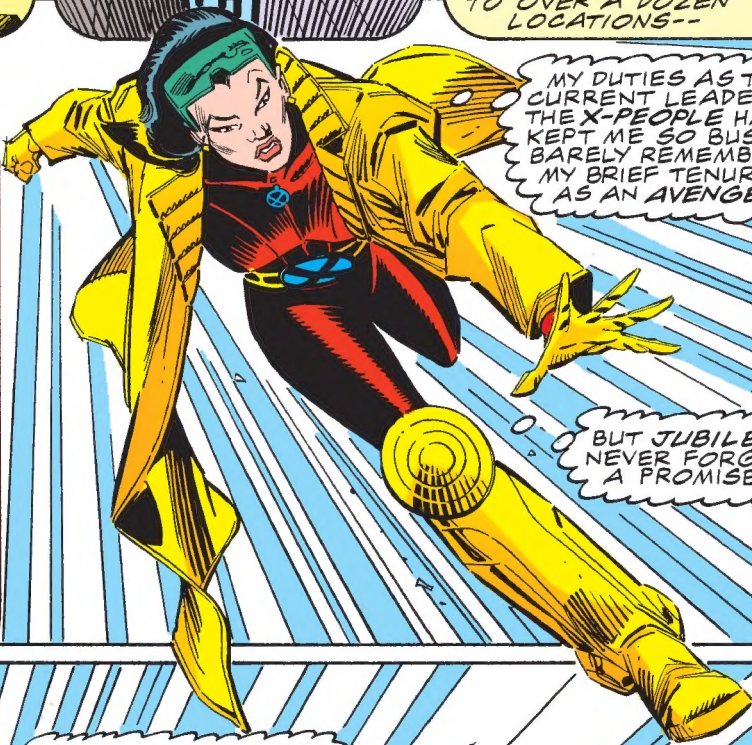
--AND IDENTIFIED!

ALMOST IMMEDIATELY, AN EMERGENCY SIGNAL IS FLASHED TO A SUB-BASEMENT WITHIN THE MANSION!



A LONG DORMANT PROGRAM IS SUDDENLY BROUGHT ONLINE--

--AND AN ALMOST FOR-GOTTEN APPEAL RACES TO OVER A DOZEN LOCATIONS--



--BUT IT IS ONLY RECEIVED IN SADDLE RIVER, NEW JERSEY--



I--I DON'T BELIEVE IT!

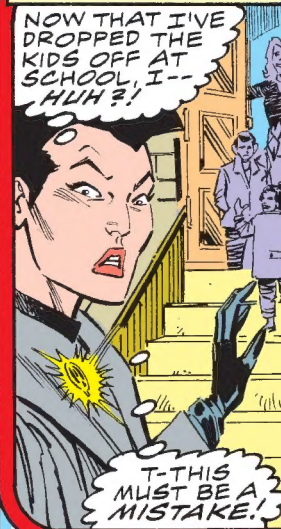
A CALL TO ASSEMBLE AFTER SO MANY YEARS--!

MY DUTIES AS THE CURRENT LEADER OF THE X-PEOPLE HAVE KEPT ME SO BUSY I BARELY REMEMBER MY BRIEF TENURE AS AN AVENGER!

BUT JUBILEE NEVER FORGETS A PROMISE!



--AND BROOKLYN HEIGHTS!



NOW THAT I'VE DROPPED THE KIDS OFF AT SCHOOL, I-- HUH?!

T-THIS MUST BE A MISTAKE!

I-IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE I WORE THIS COSTUME I BARELY FIT INTO IT! ANYMORE!

I CAN'T IMAGINE WHY ANYONE WOULD NEED MY HELP--

--BUT JOLT HAS A DUTY TO ANSWER!

AT THAT VERY MOMENT, HIGH ABOVE MANHATTAN, THE SOUNDS OF THE BUSTLING CITY ARE CUT BY AN INCES-SANT HUM WHICH SLOWLY BECOMES A TRIUMPHANT BUZZ!

YEEE-HA!

EVERYTHING'S WORKING GREAT, DAD!

THE NEW PROPULSION UNIT IS FAR FASTER AND MORE MANEU-VERABLE THAN THE OLD MODEL!

I'D SAY PROJECT STINGER IS AN UNQUALIFIED SUCCESS, BUT I MIGHT BE A LITTLE PREJUDICED!

CONGRATULATIONS, CASSIE! SEEMS LIKE THE IMPROVEMENTS WE'VE MADE ON HANK PYM'S ORIGINAL ANT-MAN AND WASP DESIGNS ARE GOOD TO GO!

I TOLD YOU NOTHING COULD BEAT THE FATHER/DAUGHTER TEAM OF SCOTT AND CASSIE LANG!

HOWEVER, WHEN I SUBMIT THE PAPER ON THIS PROJECT I-- WHOA!

I'M SUDDENLY PICKING UP SOME SORT OF A DISTRESS-- HEY, DAD! IT'S AN OLD AVENGER PRIORITY CODE!

MEANWHILE, A FEW DOZEN BLOCKS, UPTOWN...

HELP ME! PLEASE--! CALL THE COPS AND CLEAR THE STREETS!

I'M BEING CHASED BY MONSTERS!

YOU'RE BREAKING UP, DAD! SAY AGAIN? I DIDN'T GET THAT LAST TRANSMISSION!

CASSIE--?!

CASSIE!!

THE POOR BOY'S HAVING A BREAKDOWN!

YOU SHOULD'VE SAID NO TO DRUGS, KID!

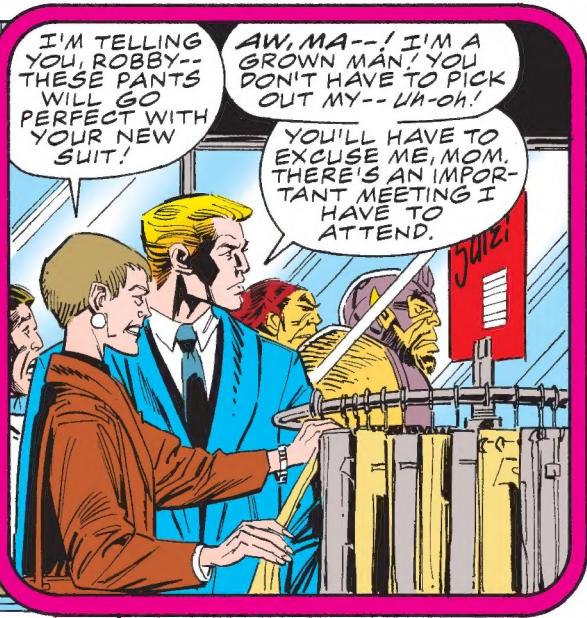


HEY!
WATCH WHO
YOU'RE
SHOVING--!

BEGONE,
YE MORTAL
CHATTTEL!
BLOCK OUR
PATH AT YOUR
OWN PERIL!

WOW! THEY
MUST BE
FILMING IN
THE AREA!

THINK WE
COULD GET
HIRED AS
EXTRAS?



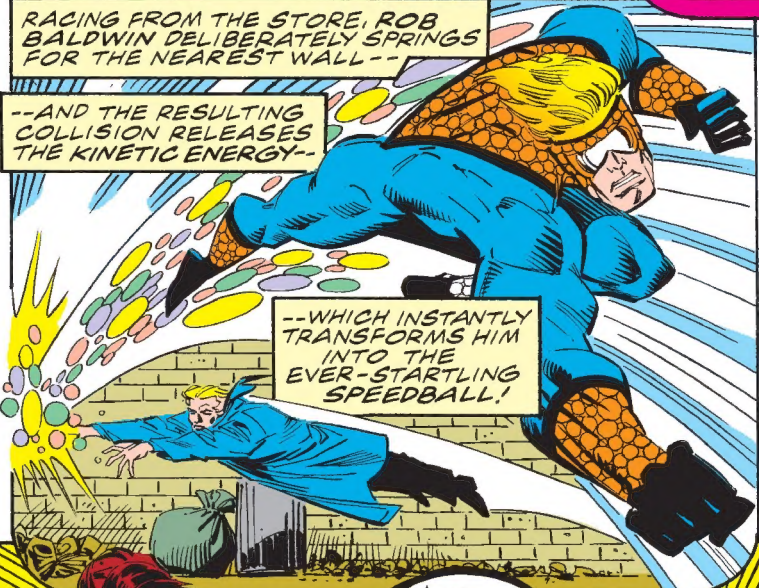
I'M TELLING
YOU, ROBBY--
THESE PANTS
WILL GO
PERFECT WITH
YOUR NEW
SUIT!

AW, MA--! I'M A
GROWN MAN! YOU
DON'T HAVE TO PICK
OUT MY-- UH-OH!

YOU'LL HAVE TO
EXCUSE ME, MOM.
THERE'S AN IMPOR-
TANT MEETING I
HAVE TO
ATTEND.

RACING FROM THE STORE, ROB
BALDWIN DELIBERATELY SPRINGS
FOR THE NEAREST WALL---

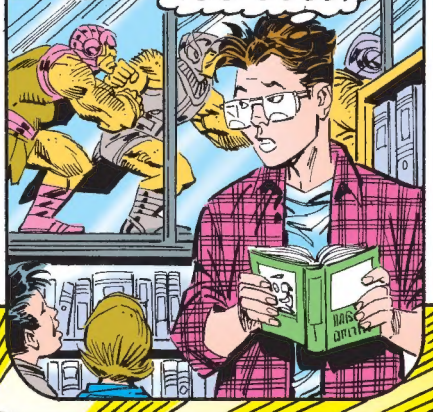
--AND THE RESULTING
COLLISION RELEASES
THE KINETIC ENERGY--



--WHICH INSTANTLY
TRANSFORMS HIM
INTO THE
EVER-STARTLING
SPEEDBALL!

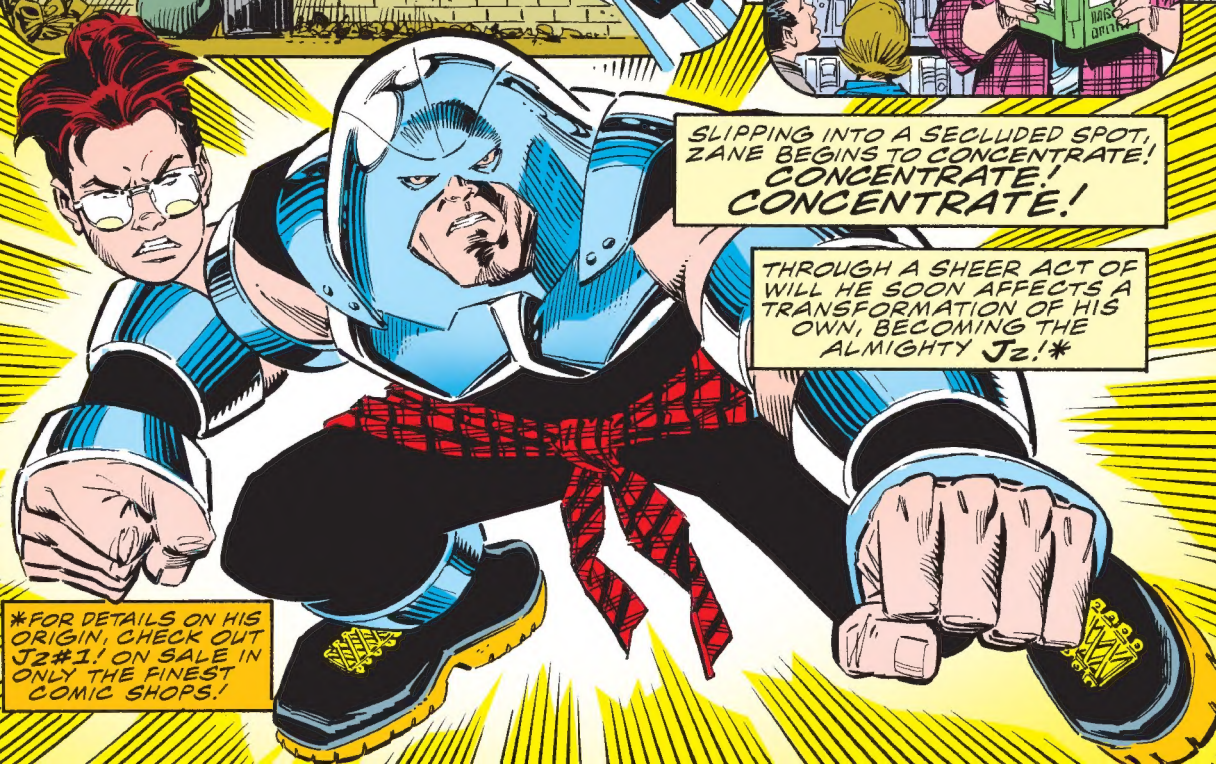
A FEW BLOCKS AWAY, HIGH
SCHOOL STUDENT ZANE
MARKO ALSO TAKES NOTE
OF THE RAMPAGING TROLLS!

LOOKS LIKE AN ARMY OF
HORRIBLY GROTESQUE
CREATURES HAS INVADDED
THE CITY! TOO COOL!



SLIPPING INTO A SECLUDED SPOT,
ZANE BEGINS TO CONCENTRATE!
**CONCENTRATE!
CONCENTRATE!**

THROUGH A SHEER ACT OF
WILL HE SOON AFFECTS A
TRANSFORMATION OF HIS
OWN, BECOMING THE
ALMIGHTY J2!*



*FOR DETAILS ON HIS
ORIGIN, CHECK OUT
J2#1, ON SALE IN
ONLY THE FINEST
COMIC SHOPS!

MEAN-WHILE...

I DON'T BELIEVE THIS! THERE ISN'T A **SUPER JOCK** IN SIGHT WHEN YOU REALLY NEED ONE! IN LOS ANGELES, WE ONLY HAVE **STUNTMASTER**, BUT THIS CITY'S SUPPOSED TO BE LOUSY WITH THEM!

YOU CAN RUN NO MORE, STRIPLING!

I HOPE SOMEONE HAD THE PRESENCE OF MIND TO CALL THE **FANTASTIC FIVE**!

HECK, AT THIS STAGE, I'D EVEN SETTLE FOR THE **STEEL SPIDER**!

YOUR CHOICE IS SIMPLE... YOU MAY CONTINUE TO CLING TO LIFE OR THE **MACE**... BUT NOT BOTH!

A panel showing several characters, including a purple-skinned alien and a man in a red shirt, behind metal bars. They appear to be in a prison or a secure facility.

W-WHY DO YOU WANT IT? IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE **USELESS**!

YOU ARE IN NO POSITION TO DEMAND EXPLANATIONS!

TURN IT OVER... OR NONE CAN SAVE YOU!

INCORRECT!

I CAN.

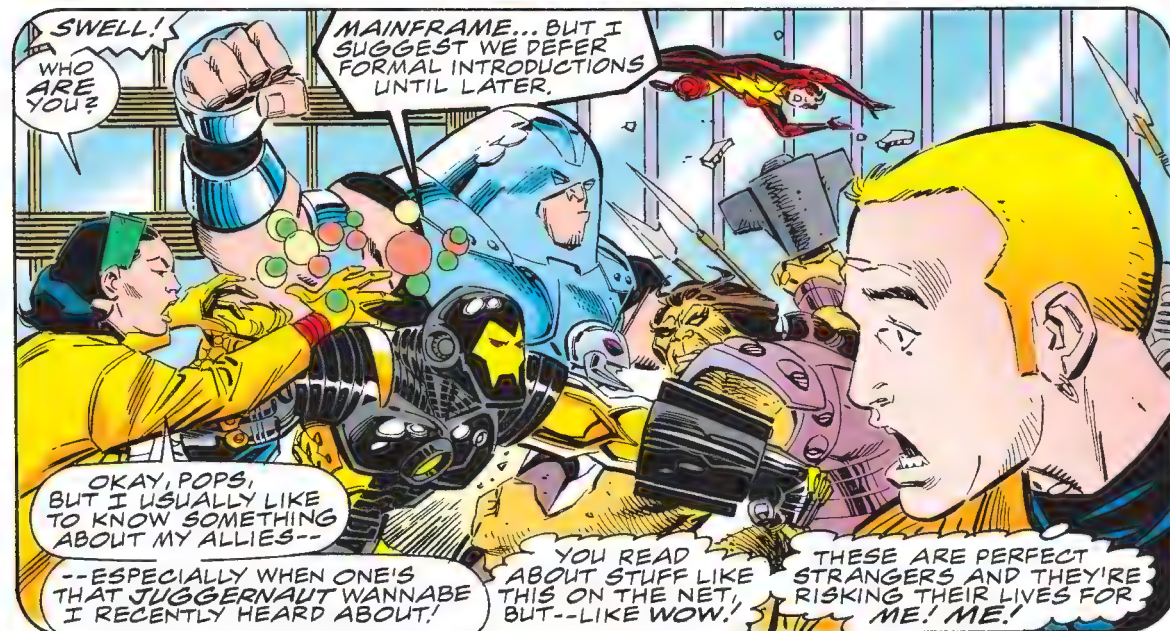
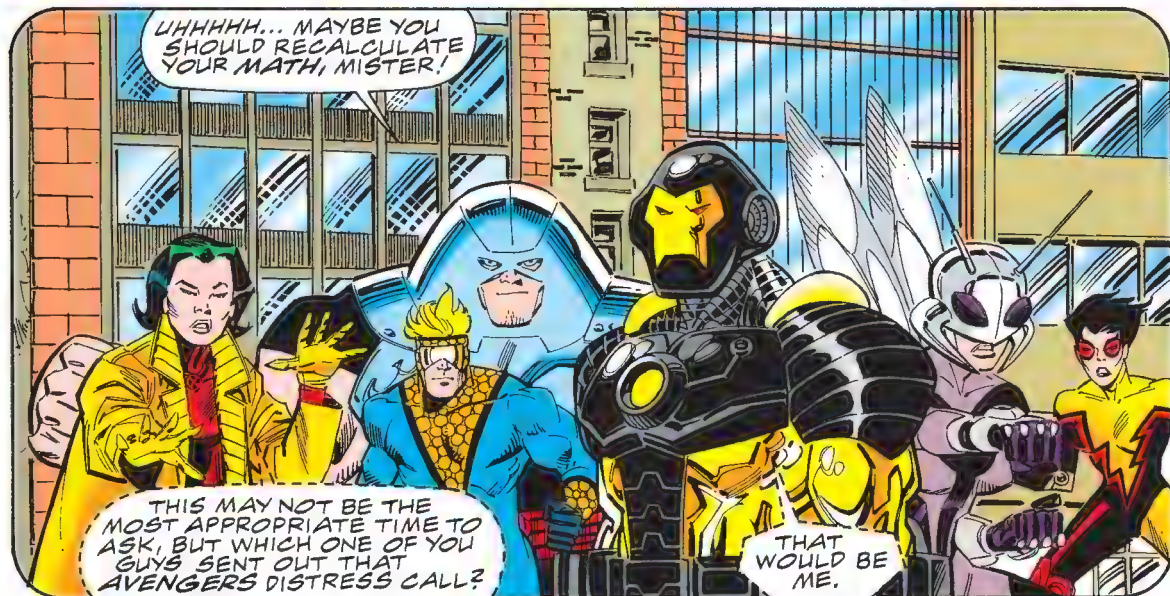
WHO DARES--?!

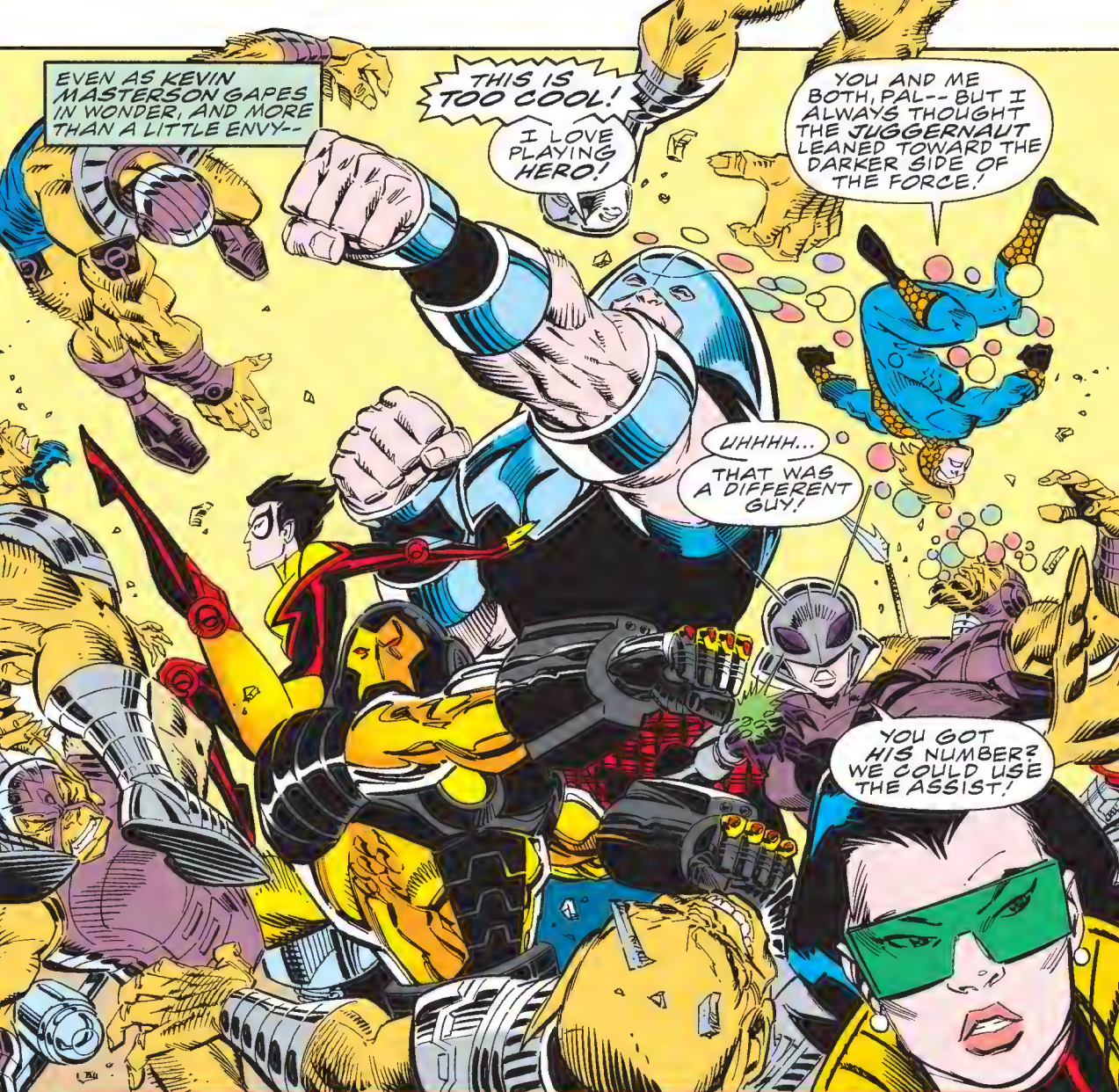
A panel showing a man in a red shirt being confronted by a large, muscular man with a yellow face and a purple mask. The man in the red shirt looks distressed and is being held back by another person.

THE NAME IS **MAINFRAME**!

I HAVE LITTLE REGARD FOR BULLIES, AND EVEN LESS FOR THREATS!

A large panel showing a massive, mechanical, yellow and black robot (Mainframe) running towards the viewer. The robot has a large, yellow, star-shaped visor. In the background, a man in a green suit is running away from the robot. In the foreground, a man in a blue and yellow suit is running towards the robot, looking determined.





EVEN AS KEVIN MASTERSON GAPES IN WONDER, AND MORE THAN A LITTLE ENVY--

THIS IS TOO COOL!

I LOVE PLAYING HERO!

YOU AND ME BOTH, PAL-- BUT I ALWAYS THOUGHT THE JUGGERNAUT LEANED TOWARD THE DARKER SIDE OF THE FORCE!

UHHHH...
THAT WAS A DIFFERENT GUY!

YOU GOT HIS NUMBER??
WE COULD USE THE ASSIST!

EVEN BEFORE J2 CAN MOUTH AN APPROPRIATE COMEBACK, THERE IS A SUDDEN BURST OF LIGHT AND THEN--!

ENOUGH OF THIS FOOLISHNESS! I WILL BROOK NO FURTHER DELAY! I DESIRE THAT MACE, AND I WILL HAVE IT NOW!

ANOTHER BLINDING BURST OF BRILLIANCE ERUPTS AS IF FROM THE VERY AIR, SWEEPING OVER BOTH THE HEROES AND THEIR FIERCE ADVERSARIES!

IT SEEMS ONLY AN INSTANT LATER, BUT AS THEIR EYES GRADUALLY REGAIN SIGHT, THE VALIANT WARRIORS DISCOVER THEMSELVES BOUND BY SHACKLES AND MAGICS WHICH PREVENT THEM FROM EMPLOYING THEIR MIGHTY POWERS.



EVERYONE'S TIED UP EXCEPT ME!

GUESS I WASN'T WORTH THE EFFORT!

W-WHERE ARE WE?!

NOT THAT IT REALLY MATTERS, BUT I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF TRANSPORTING YOU TO MY TURF...

ASGARD, KNOWN TO MERE MORTALS AS THE RENOWNED HOME OF THE NORSE GODS!

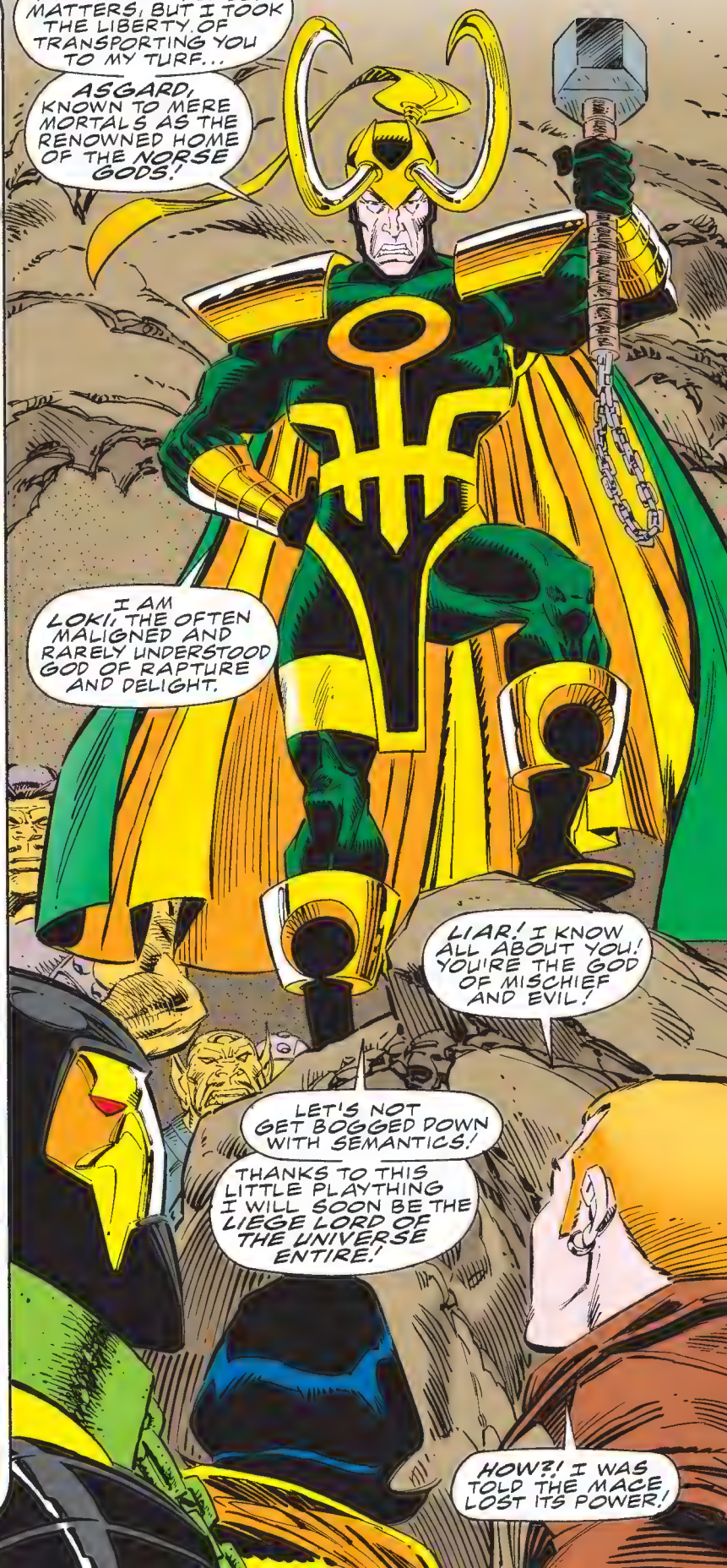
I AM LOKI, THE OFTEN MALIGNED AND RARELY UNDERSTOOD GOD OF RAPTURE AND DELIGHT.

LIAR! I KNOW ALL ABOUT YOU! YOU'RE THE GOD OF MISCHIEF AND EVIL!

LET'S NOT GET BOGGED DOWN WITH SEMANTICS!

THANKS TO THIS LITTLE PLAYTHING I WILL SOON BE THE LIEGE LORD OF THE UNIVERSE ENTIRE!

HOW?! I WAS TOLD THE MACE LOST ITS POWER!



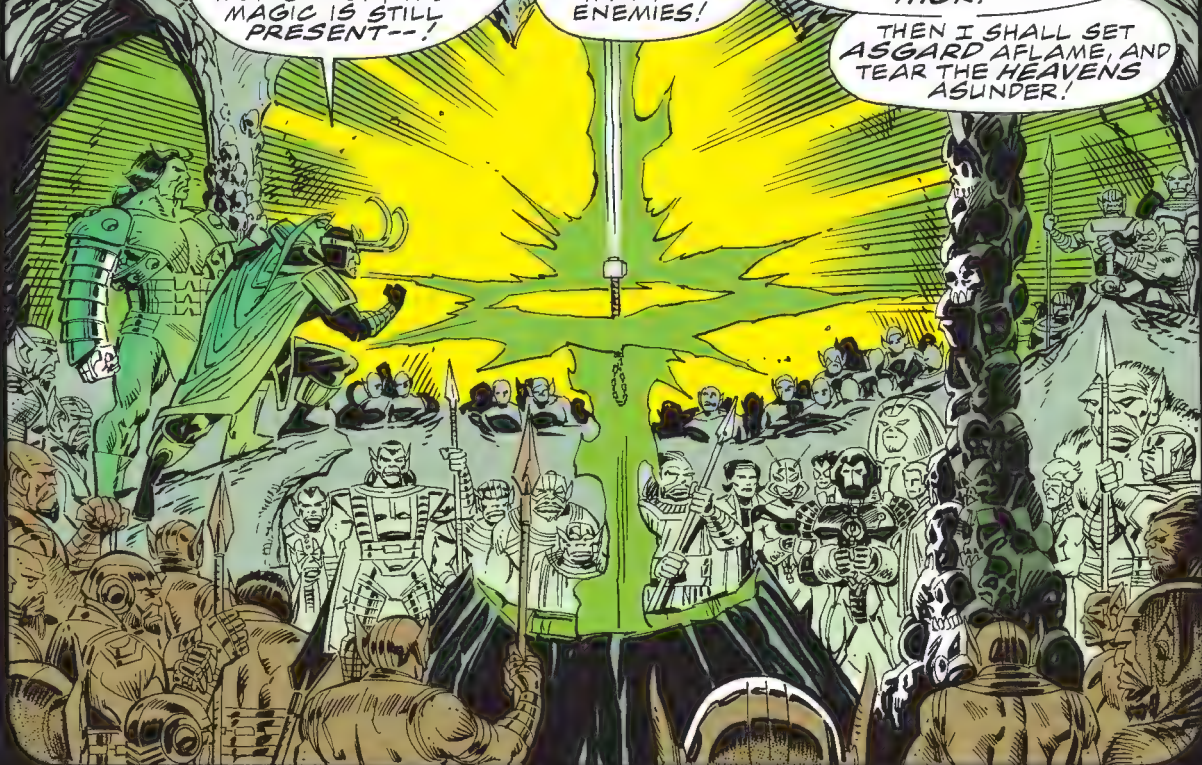
SHORTLY...

WHILE IT IS TRUE THAT THE ENCHANTMENTS WHICH RELEASED THE MACE'S FULL POTENTIAL WERE TIED TO ITS FORMER OWNER, THE MAGIC IS STILL PRESENT--!

I INTEND TO ACCESS IT, AND EMPLOY IT AS A POWER SOURCE AGAINST MY MANY ENEMIES!

FROM THE SAFETY OF THIS HIDDEN BASE ON THE ISLE OF SILENCE, I SHALL STRIKE DOWN MY HATED HALF-BROTHER LORD THOR!

THEN I SHALL SET ASGARD AFLAME, AND TEAR THE HEAVENS ASUNDER!



LOKI'S RESTRAINING SPELL DOESN'T SEEM TO AFFECT TECHNOLOGY. I BELIEVE I CAN FREE US ALL.

ARE YOU SURE, MAIN-FRAME? I CAN'T GET MY STINGERS TO WORK.



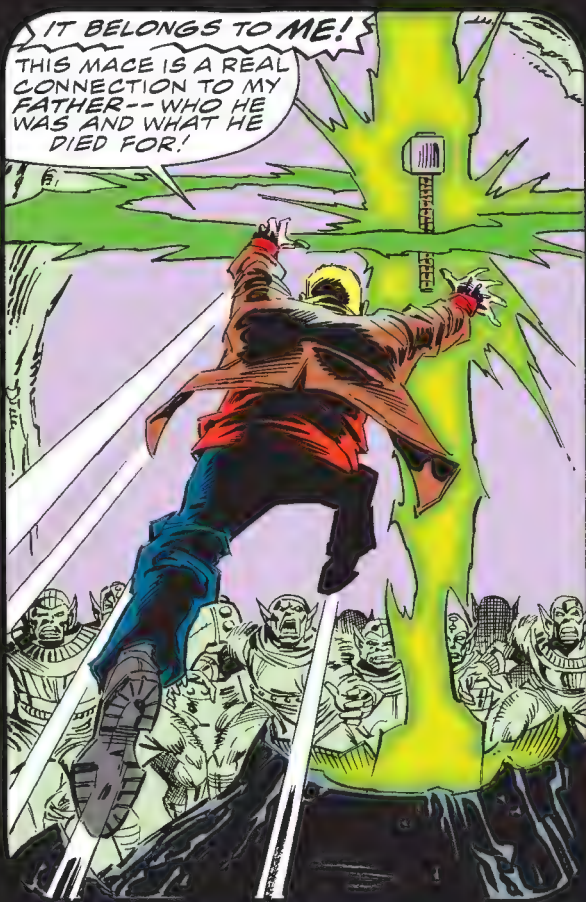
TRUST ME! ALL WE NEED IS A DISTRACTION!

FOR AN ETERNAL INSTANT, KEVIN MASTERSON STANDS PERFECTLY STILL, NOT DARING TO BREATHE OR THINK, AND THEN...

IF THESE GUYS NEED A DISTRACTION, IT'S UP TO ME TO PROVIDE ONE--!



GET YOUR SLIMY HANDS OFF MY MACE, YOU HORN-HEADED HUCKSTER!



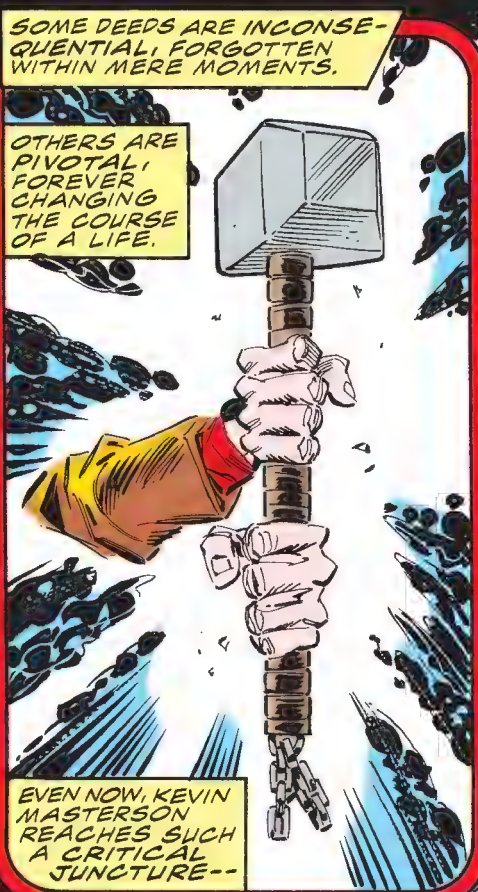
IT BELONGS TO ME!

THIS MACE IS A REAL CONNECTION TO MY FATHER-- WHO HE WAS AND WHAT HE DIED FOR!



I WON'T ALLOW YOU TO PERVERT HIS MEMORY BY USING HIS MOST PRIZED POSSESSION FOR EVIL!

EVERYONE IS JUDGED BY HIS OR HER ACTIONS, AND THE COUNTLESS DECISIONS MADE IN DAILY LIFE...



SOME DEEDS ARE INCONSEQUENTIAL, FORGOTTEN WITHIN MERE MOMENTS.

OTHERS ARE PIVOTAL, FOREVER CHANGING THE COURSE OF A LIFE.

EVEN NOW, KEVIN MASTERSON REACHES SUCH A CRITICAL JUNCTURE--



--A DEFINING MOMENT WHICH, AS FATE WOULD HAVE IT, IS HERALDED BY A BRILLIANT EXPLOSION OF CELESTIAL LUMINANCE--

--AND THE SOUND OF THUNDER!

RETRIEVE THE MACE, YOU MISBEGOTTEN MONSTROSITIES!

IF THE BOY STILL LIVES... KILL HIM!

AYE, MASTER! TERRIBLE AND LONG SHALL BE HIS SUFFERINGS!

BUT THEN, THE MASSIVE TROLL WARRIOR SUDDENLY FREEZES IN PLACE, HIS EYES EXPANDING IN EVER-INCREASING PANIC--!

MILORD! THE MACE IS...

...GONE!

AND THE BOY IS...

...IS...

THE WORD YOU'RE STUMBLING FOR IS... TRANSFORMED!

SEIZE THIS ARROGANT YOUTH! BATTER HIM INTO SUBMISSION!

I... I'M NOT EXACTLY SURE WHAT HAPPENED, BUT EVERYTHING WENT PSYCHO WHEN I DISRUPTED LOKI'S SPELL!

BUT THIS IS NO TIME FOR BORING EXPOSITION! THE TROLLS ARE CLOSING IN, AND--!

HOO-BOY! IT WORKS! I REALLY DO HAVE THE POWERS OF THUNDERSTRIKE!

I SUDDENLY FEEL STRONGER! MORE POWERFUL THAN EVER!

AS CRAZY AS IT SOUNDS, THE MAGICAL BACKLASH MUST HAVE SOMEHOW MERGED ME WITH MY DAD'S MACE!

NICE ZAP BOLT, PAL... BUT WHERE'D YOU GET THE FLASHY COSTUME?

YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE THE HEADACHES I WENT THROUGH FOR MINE!

I... I'M NOT SURE WHERE IT CAME FROM!

BUT I'VE HAD THIS LOOK IN MY MIND SINCE I WAS A KID!

WE CAN DISCUSS THE FINER POINTS OF FASHION LATER. RIGHT NOW WE HAVE A FIGHT ON OUR HANDS--!

KWAKA-BWOOM!

AND FIGHT THEY DO AS TYRUS ORDERS HIS BLOODTHIRSTY THROG TO ATTACK! ATTACK!

THEY'RE CALLING IN MORE AND MORE REINFORCEMENTS!

THIS IS ALL MY FAULT! I'LL BE RESPONSIBLE IF ANY OF THE OTHERS ARE HURT OR KILLED--!

HEY, EVERYBODY! TRY TO GET BEHIND ME!

I'M SURE I CAN PLOW RIGHT THROUGH THESE CLOWNS, AND REACH THE EDGE OF THE ISLAND!

THEN WHAT?!

STINGER'S RIGHT! THERE'S NOWHERE FOR US TO HGNNE

KEEP FIGHTING! WE HAVE TO FIND A WAY TO TURN BACK THIS INHUMAN TIDE HERE AND NOW.

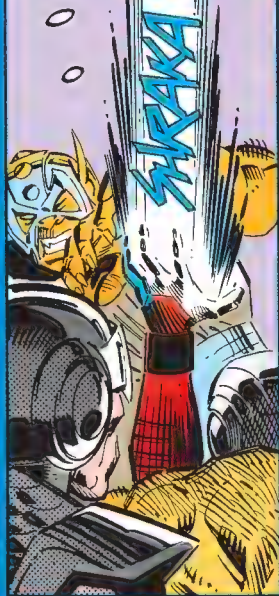
E-EASIER SAID THAN DONE, METAL-HEAD!

I CAN'T USE MY KINETIC POWERS WITHOUT ROOM TO MANEUVER.

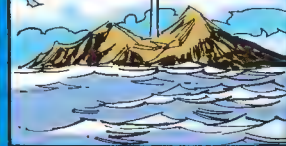
1-IT'S NO USE! WE'RE BEING OVERWHELMED BY SHEER NUMBERS! IT'S LIKE EVERY TROLL IN ASGARD HAS--
ASGARD?!

OF COURSE! THAT'S THE ANSWER--!

IF WE REALLY ARE ON ASSGARD, THERE'S HOPE FOR US YET IF I CAN ONLY--!



BWOOM!



NO! NO!
THE YOUTH HAS
UNDONE US!

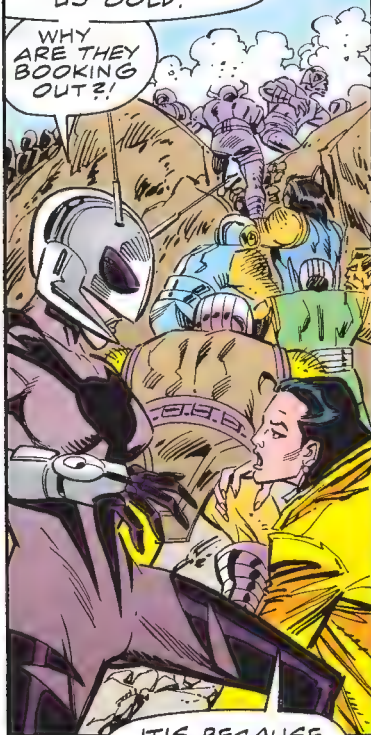
SOUND THE
RETREAT! WE
MUST FLEE--
NOW-- WHILE
THERE IS STILL
TIME!

B-BUT
WHY, MILORD?!
THE MORTALS
ARE ABOUT TO
FALL!

FORGET THEM!
WE MUST BEGONE--
OR ALL IS LOST!

DID I MISS SOME-
THING?! THEY HAD
US COLD!

WHY
ARE THEY
BOOKING
OUT?!



IT'S BECAUSE
OF THAT FLARE
WHICH T-STRIKE
SHOT INTO THE
SKY!

YOU WERE
OBVIOUSLY
TRYING TO
SIGNAL
SOMEONE
...BUT
WHO?!

YEAH!
HOW ABOUT
MAKING
WITH A FEW
ANSWERS?

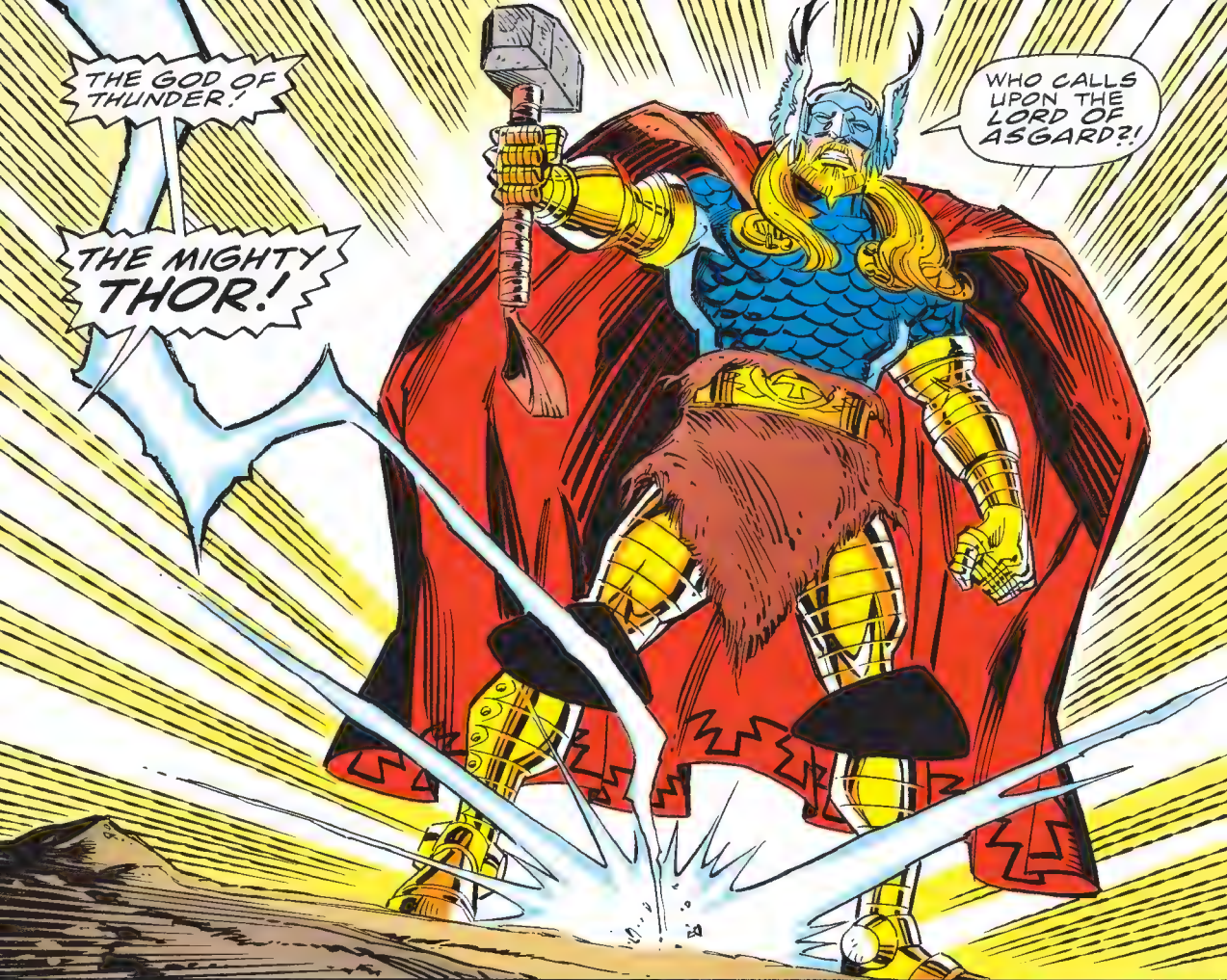


SURE! JUST
LOOK UPWARD--!

YOU HEAR THAT
RUMBLE IN THE DIS-
TANCE? SEE THAT STREAK
RACING ACROSS THE
HEAVENS?



WE'RE
ON ASSGARD,
REMEMBER? SO
I SENT UP A
DISTRESS CALL,
HOPING THAT IT
WOULD GET
A RESPONSE
FROM--



THE GOD OF THUNDER!

THE MIGHTY THOR!

WHO CALLS UPON THE LORD OF ASGARD?!



IF THERE BE FOES OF THE REALM ETERNAL, LET THEM NOW--

HEIMDALL'S HORN!

ERIC--?!



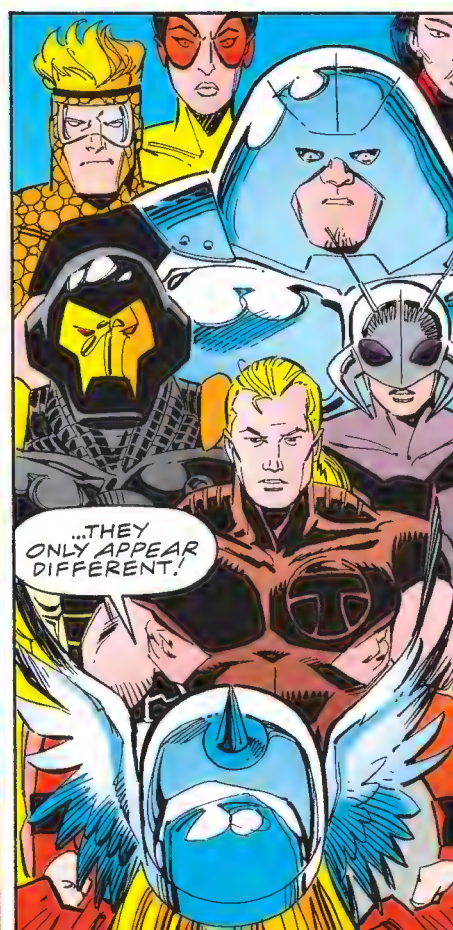
NO SUCH LUCK! I'M KEVIN... HIS SON!

WHY COME YOU HERE, AND WHY DO YOU SHIMMER WITH POWER UNTOLD?

LONG STORY... WITH A MAJOR EMPHASIS ON LOKI AND MY DAD'S MACE.

LOKI?!?

AH, SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE...



...THEY ONLY APPEAR DIFFERENT!

THE TALE IS TOLD AMID A GLORIOUS CELEBRATION WITHIN ETHERAL ASGARD! * AND THEN, EVEN AS THE MIGHTY THUNDER GOD EMPLOYS HIS OWN ENCHANTED HAMMER TO RETURN OUR HEROES TO EARTH, HE LEAVES THEM WITH THESE PARTING WORDS...

"THE PLANET SPINS!
THE PAGE TURNS!"

"AND THE WORLD STILL
NEEDS HEROES!"

"MAY EACH AND
ALL PROVE WORTHY
OF THE PRIVILEGE
BEFORE YOU!"

THOR
BROUGHT UP
AN INTERESTING
POINT...

TEN YEARS IS TOO
LONG A TIME FOR THE
EARTH TO BE WITHOUT
ITS MIGHTIEST
HEROES!

*MAYBE WE'LL TELL YOU
ABOUT IT SOMETIME...IF
YOU ASK REAL NICE!

CORRECT,
AND I
HAVE A
MOTION TO
MAKE.

WHOA! I CAN SEE
WHERE THIS IS HEADED,
AND MY DUTIES AS THE
LEADER OF THE
X-PEOPLE PREVENT ME
FROM MAKING
ANOTHER FULL-TIME
COMMITMENT!

ALTHOUGH I REALLY
SHOULD HAVE A PRIVATE
CHAT WITH J2 IN THE
NOT TOO DISTANT
FUTURE.*

SAME GOES FOR ME!
I'LL BE GLAD TO PITCH
IN EVERY ONCE IN
AWHILE, BUT I
LIKE BEING A
SOLO ACT!

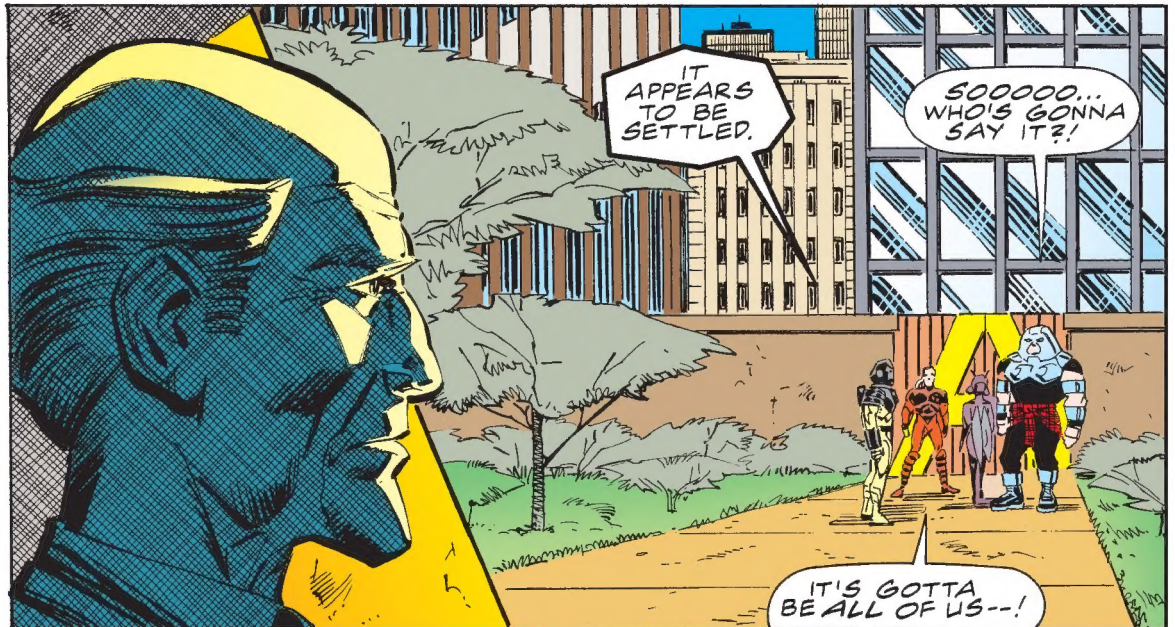
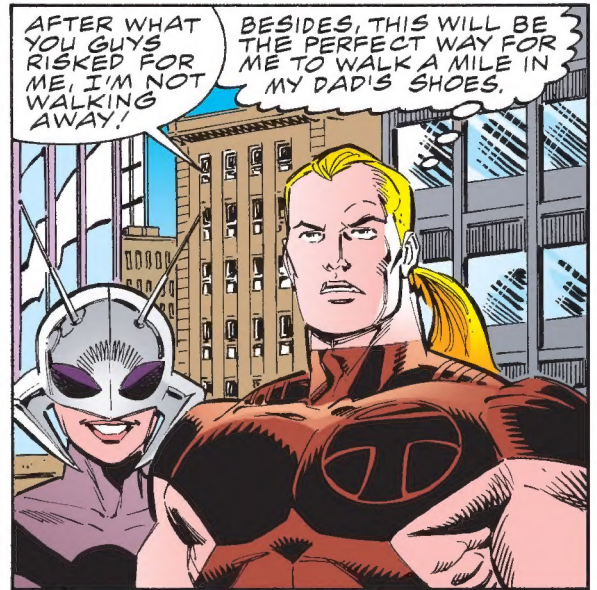
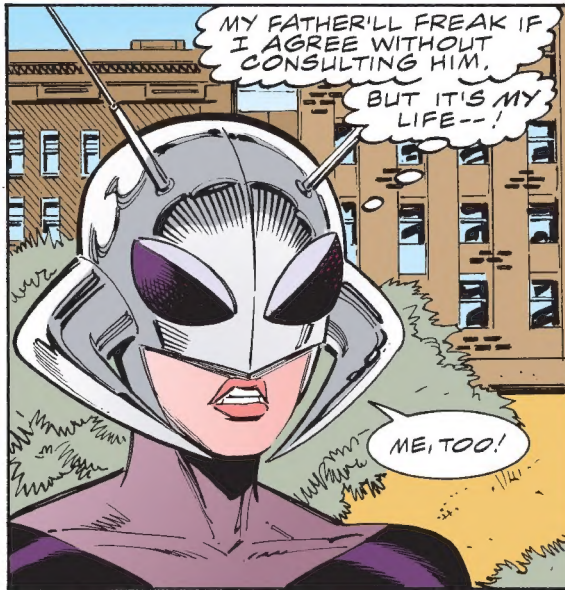
YOU KNOW MY
NUMBER IF YOU
NEED ME--

--BUT I
CONSIDER MYSELF
SEMI-RETIRED AT
THIS POINT IN MY
LIFE!

SO...WHERE
DOES THAT
LEAVE US?!

WITH
MORE THAN
ENOUGH.

*JUBILEE WILL GET HER
CHANCE IN J2 #2!



AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!!



D-DOES THIS
MEAN WHAT I
THINK IT DOES,
MISTER
JARVIS?

EDWIN JARVIS TRIES TO
ANSWER, BUT THE WORDS
CATCH IN HIS THROAT AS
HE WATCHES HISTORY IN
THE MAKING...

AGAIN!

THE BEGINNING--!

Shadowcat

